

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 1103

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SUBJ: CARLOS FUENTES MACIAS, NEW MEXICAN AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE

1. PROMINENT MEXICAN NOVELIST AND INTELLECTUAL, CARLOS FUENTES MACIAS WAS DESIGNATED MEXICAN AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE BY PRESIDENT LUIS ECHEVERRIA JAN 31.

2. FUENTES WAS BORN NOVEMBER 11, 1920 IN PANAMA CITY, PANAMA, THE SON OF RAFAEL FUENTES, A FORMER MEXICAN CAREER DIPLOMAT. HE IS A GRADUATE OF THE SCHOOL OF LAW OF THE NATIONAL AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF MEXICO CITY (UNAM) AND DID POSTGRADUATE WORK AT THE INSTITUTE OF HIGHER INTERNATIONAL STUDIES, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND. A MEMBER OF MEXICO'S PERMANENT DELEGATION TO THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION IN GENEVA IN 1950, HE LATER SERVED AS DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS OF THE SECRETARIAT OF FOREIGN RELATIONS. HE WAS INSTRUCTOR AT UNAM 1961-66. FUENTES WAS DIVORCED IN 1974 FROM ACTRESS RITA MACEDO. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, HE IS NOW MARRIED TO SILVIA LEMUS, BY WHOM (ALSO, ACCORDING TO PRESS) HE HAS THREE CHILDREN.

3. FUENTES, CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF, IF NOT THE BEST OF MEXICO'S CONTEMPORARY AUTHORS, HAS WRITTEN SEVERAL WIDELY-READ NOVELS, INCLUDING "THE DEATH OF ARTEMIO CRUZ" AND "CHANGE OF
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SKIN". FUENTES HAS JUST RETURNED TO MEXICO AFTER A YEAR AS A

FELLOW OF THE WOODROW WILSON INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTE IN WASHINGTON, WHERE HE WROTE A SOON TO BE PUBLISHED NOVEL ("TERRA NOSTRA") TREATING THE IMPACT OF THE COLONIAL PERIOD ON MEXICAN CULTURE AND POLITICAL TRADITION.

4. FUENTES IN THE 1960'S WAS A MEMBER OF THE MEXICAN "MOVEMENT OF NATIONAL LIBERATION", A NOW DEFUNCT ORGANIZATION WHICH TOOK ITS INSPIRATION FROM THE CUBAN REVOLUTION. DUE TO THIS AND REPORTED (IN 1963) MEMBERSHIP IN THE MEXICAN COMMUNIST PARTY, FUENTES IS INELIGIBLE FOR NIV UNDER 212(A) (28) OF INA; AFTER BEING REFUSED VISA IN 1962, HE HAS BEEN GRANTED SEVERAL WAIVERS BUT IS STILL SENSITIVE ON THE SUBJECT OF HIS INELIGIBILITY.

5. FOLLOWING 1968 USSR INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVIA (AND AN EARLIER REPORTED DISILLUSIONMENT WITH SOCIALIST BLOC POLITICAL SYSTEMS), FUENTES (ALWAYS CRITICAL OF US FOREIGN POLICY) ISSUED A "PLAGUE-ON-BOTH-YOUR-HOUSES" STATEMENT. HIS POLITICAL ACTIVITY SINCE 1968 APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN NO MORE THAN AN OCCASIONAL LENDING OF HIS NAME TO ONE OR ANOTHER CAUSE (E.G. A FEB 4 POLITICAL AD IN MEXICO CITY DAILIES, SIGNED BY MORE THAN A HUNDRED PEOPLE, HINTING CIA CULPABILITY IN RECENT BOMBINGS HERE).

6. FUENTES WAS ALSO CRITICAL OF THE GOM FOLLOWING THE OCTOBER 1968 "TLATELOLCO MASSACRE", (OVER WHICH HE RESIGNED A MINOR GOM POST IN PROTEST) IN WHICH AN UNKNOWN NUMBER OF MEXICANS, PRIMARILY STUDENTS, LOST THEIR LIVES. HOWEVER, HE IS ONE OF A FEW PROMINENT MEXICAN INTELLECTUALS UPON WHOM PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA APPEARS TO HAVE MADE HIS MARK. IN JUNE 1972 FUENTES HELPED ORGANIZE A DISCUSSION BETWEEN ECHEVERRIA AND A NUMBER OF INTELLECTUALS AND WRITERS WHEN ECHEVERRIA VISITED NEW YORK. IN SEPTEMBER 1974 FUENTES WROTE A LETTER LAUDATORY OF ECHEVERRIA ADMINISTRATION TO TIME MAGAZINE IN RESPONSE TO WHAT FUENTES CONSIDERED UNFAIR TREATMENT OF ECHEVERRIA ADMINISTRATION IN AN ARTICLE CONCERNING THE KIDNAPPING OF PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA'S FATHER-IN-LAW.

7. AMBASSADOR JOVA, WHO LUNCHEDED WITH FUENTES IN WASHINGTON IN NOVEMBER, FOUND HIM AN EXTREMELY PERSONABLE MAN, AN EXCELLENT CONVERSATIONALIST WHO IS MUCH MORE WITTY AND WORLDLY CONFIDENTIAL

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THAN MOST MEXICAN "INTELLECTUALS" (A SOMETIMES STUFFY LOT).
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